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THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

VOL. LX.

BOSTON, DECEMBER, 1898.

No. 11.

THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY,
PUBLISHERS,
NO. 3 SOMERSET STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

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The Encouragements of the Year.

The year now closing has tested the faith and the loyalty of the friends of peace. In many respects it has been a year of discouragements. The Far-Eastern question has been distressingly unsettled, and war in the Orient has constantly threatened. Great Britain has just ended one of the bloodiest of her campaigns against native races on her colonial borders. She has been on the verge of hostilities with her great neighbor France, the navies of both countries having been hastily rushed into preparation for war. France and Germany have shown little signs of reconciliation over the question which has for nearly thirty years separated them, and their preparations for war have been maintained with the utmost tension. Great Britain has increased both her navy and her army budgets, and her imperiousness in all quarters of the globe has never been more pronounced nor the irritation against her greater. If Russia has had a change of heart, which

many hope, the effect on her international conduct has not yet had time to appear. More disappointing to the friends of peace than any of these things—for these were all more or less expected—has been the war between the United States and Spain, with the threatening complications which have grown out of it, and the extension of *American militarism* already surely following it.

With all these movements of the war spirit and so much actual war before them, it has not been easy for the advocates of peace to find encouragement, except in the consciousness of the rightness of their cause and the consequent certainty of its ultimate *future triumph*. Not a few whose attachment to the cause has depended almost entirely on the outward evidences of its prosperity have become hopeless and decided that peace effort, in the present condition of the world, is wasted. They have either "fallen away" and gone with the multitude to glorify war or the seed of peace within them has been "choked and become unfruitful."

But to those who look deeply into the movement of events the year has offered some strong encouragements. Many have encouraged themselves that the war of this country with Spain over Cuba, and the war of Anglo-Egypt with the Dervishes, will either work directly, or be overruled, for the promotion of peace. But this is not the encouragement of which we speak. Whatever peace is won in one quarter by war is very apt to be offset or more than counterbalanced by strife and conflict in another unless the movements engendered by war are counteracted by other influences.

The chief encouragement of the year has been the fact that the opponents of war throughout the civilized world have been more numerous and more decided and more outspoken than ever before since civilization began to have a name. The peace associations, now numbering more than four hundred

and forming a coherent coöperating body in all the civilized nations, have entered a strong and virtually unanimous protest for peace at every point where war has occurred or threatened to occur during the year. Outside of their ranks the same protest has been entered by a large number of men and women whose convictions in many cases are quite as radical as those of the members of the peace organizations. Beyond these is a still larger number who have only given their voice for war with the greatest reluctance, and whose support of actual war has been of the most perfunctory kind. Looking at matters in the large, this fund of anti-war sentiment is of the utmost significance. It has not been extended enough and strong enough to prevent outbreaks of hostilities, but it has proved its vitality and staying and growing power in the face of most unlooked for obstacles. The world has heard its voice and felt its touch in the very midst of the noise and confusion of the clash of arms. As matter of encouragement we place above all other considerations this clear fact of anti-war public sentiment, of which unnumbered evidences might be brought from the press, from the pulpit, from the school, from the jurist's office, from the business world, from the literary circle. The faith of the opponents of war rests upon this well-grounded growing sentiment, conforming itself to right and truth, and not upon the present changing phases of international politics which are, as at present directed, certain to be almost as disappointing one day as they were encouraging the day before.

But this rapidly growing peace sentiment has got beyond the private rostrum. It has actually uttered its voice in practical international politics in a way hitherto unknown. Two events of the year will be forever recorded as among the greatest in the annals of human progress. While the fleets and armies of the United States and Spain were preparing to meet each other in the old barbarous way of brutal violence, Italy and the Argentine Republic were quietly negotiating a general treaty of arbitration. Before the Spanish-American War closed, this treaty was completed and *ratiſed*. It is now in force, the first of its kind ever made. It is a better treaty than that drawn by Pauncefote and Olney, as will be seen by examining its provisions. We Americans, who sold our birthright and disgraced ourselves by rejecting the Olney-Pauncefote

treaty, have been too busy with shedding blood and noisily boasting of the "glory" of our "humanitarian"—imperialistic war, even to know what Italy and Argentina were doing. Not one American in a hundred thousand knows that such a treaty has been made, though America is the mother of Arbitration. But the deed has been done,—a deed of the new civilization whose glory will eclipse forever the "glory" of the "humanitarian" war of the United States.

To the other encouraging event of the year, more than usual space is given in this issue of the **ADVOCATE**, in other columns. While General Kitchener was leading his forces up the Nile, to slaughter, with modern "Christianized" implements of war, a whole army of Dervish "fiends," who were trying with old-fashioned weapons to defend what they believed to be their rights, the Czar of Russia was dictating his great manifesto, inviting all the nations to send representatives to a conference on the reduction of armaments. What shall be said of the bloody "glory" of Kitchener, over whom England has been going wild, as compared with that of Nicholas II., who has made himself, as events since the 24th of August have proved, the interpreter of this mighty, widely developed anti-war sentiment of which we have been speaking! If the wars and rumors of war of which the year has been so full have been discouraging, the peace and rumors of peace which have forced themselves into notice in spite of the noise of battle and the strained preparations for battle, are full of encouragement.

War with its "glory" is passing. Not even the United States can succeed in maintaining its respectability, however large a navy or army she may imagine herself into the necessity of building. If the immediate future of our own beloved country is somewhat uncertain and the war clouds hang dark everywhere, the year closes with a real sunburst of hope for the wider humanity, which is greater than any country. We are a year nearer, in every sense, to the beginning of the reign of universal peace, and both truth and hope encourage us to cheerful and unremitting effort. In a few days we shall all be reading and thinking again of the great Christmas Message, "On Earth Peace, Goodwill to Men." There is much, very much more peace on earth and goodwill among men than there was on that night when these words of promise were first uttered. And yet more is just before us.